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ABSTRACT

Wichita, Kansas maintained a dual black and white school system from 1906 to 1952. Segregation continued, however, between 1952 and 1971. The board of education appointed a blue-ribbon, low economic area problems committee which made recommendations for desegregation of the schools along both racial and socioeconomic lines. Recommendations for improvement in the quality of teaching, development of educational parks, and pupil transportation were rejected by the board. In 1969 the board of education ordered the desegregation of Wichita's secondary schools. This involved the dispersal of black students. After the Office of Civil Rights moved to cut off federal funds to the district, and that sanction had been approved by an administrative law judge, the district adopted a voluntary desegregation plan to establish equitable pupil rations by crossbusing students and closing some predominantly black schools. This was implemented in the 1971-72 school year. The plan was adopted because the business and civic leaders supported the effort. After adoption, both black and white community groups protested without impact. The entire community led by the school administration participated in implementation. Despite some difficulties with discipline, desegregation proved successful. Academic achievement improved. Teachers learned to cope with new problems. White parents and children volunteered to participate in the desegregation effort in ever increasing numbers. (Author/AM)

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SCHOOL DESEGREGATION IN WICHITA, KANSAS

A STAFF REPORT OF
THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION
ON CIVIL RIGHTS

August 1977

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
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PREFACE

The United States Commission on Civil Rights released on August 24, 1976, its report to the Nation: Fulfilling the Letter and Spirit of the Law: Desegregation of the Nation's Public Schools.

The report's findings and recommendations were based upon information gathered during a 10-month school desegregation project. This included four formal hearings (Boston, Massachusetts; Denver, Colorado; Louisville, Kentucky; and Tampa, Florida); four open meetings held by State Advisory Committees (Berkeley, California; Corpus Christi, Texas; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Stamford, Connecticut); a survey of nearly 1,300 local school districts; and 29 case studies of communities which had difficulties with desegregation, had moderate success with desegregation, or had substantial success with desegregation.

Subsequent to the report's release, considerable interest was generated concerning the specifics of the case study findings, which, owing to space limitations in the national report, were limited to a few brief paragraphs. In an effort to comply with public requests for more detailed information, Commission staff have prepared monographs for each of the case studies. These monographs were written from the extensive field notes already collected and supplemented, if needed, with further interviews in each community. They reflect, in detail, the original case study purpose of finding which local policies, practices, and programs in each community surveyed contributed to peaceful desegregation and which ones did not.

It is hoped that the following monograph will serve to further an understanding of the school desegregation process in this Nation.

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I. BACKGROUND

"Center City, U.S.A."

Wichita is located in the southeastern section of Kansas. It is the largest city in the State, with a population in 1970 of 276,718. Residents in this self-proclaimed "Center City, U.S.A." included 9.6 percent blacks and 3.5 percent Hispanics.[1]

Manufacturing is an important sector of the local economy. More than 600 firms are located in Wichita, with aircraft production particularly prominent: Beach, Boeing, Cessna, and Gates Learjet each employ more than 1,000 persons.[2]

Wichita is served by 2 daily and 4 weekly newspapers as well as 4 television and 13 radio stations. The city is the site of a major State university and two private colleges.

Race Relations in Wichita

Kansas became notorious as "Bleeding Kansas" in the 1850s when free-soil advocates struggled with proslavery forces over whether Kansas would enter the Union as a free or slave State. Wichita, which did not develop into an urban center until much later in the century, was not a focal point of this strife.[3]

After the Civil War, several hundred former slaves settled in southeastern Kansas. Although black migration to Wichita itself was not large, by the turn of the century the growing city had become a target for Ku Klux Klan recruitment: some 6,000 of the 100,000 residents were Klan members at that time.

Black migration to Wichita increased substantially after the Second World War. The black community soon expanded beyond the boundaries of the city's traditional black district. Neighborhoods began to change swiftly from white to mixed to black as panic selling by whites--fueled by the refusal of the Wichita Real Estate Board to control its less scrupulous members--became common.

By 1960 racial segregation characterized Wichita's residential and economic patterns. The five predominantly black census tracts contained 8 percent of the city's population but 40 percent of the countywide Aid for Dependent Children caseload and 27 percent of the general assistance caseload. Blacks were concentrated in unskilled and service work and were virtually excluded from professional, technical, managerial, and official positions: the number of such positions held by blacks amounted to less than 0.1 percent. In 1970 the median income for Wichita residents generally was $9,523, compared to only $6,066 for blacks and Hispanics.

In 1967, following the outbreak of racial violence, much was said about improving job opportunities and recreational facilities for the black community. The city commission replaced the Wichita Human Relations Council and the Wichita Council for Community Development at this time with a single Human Resources Development Advisory Board. Black leaders were skeptical about the change, and the new board has been able to do little to alter existing residential and economic patterns.

The passage of a local fair housing ordinance following the Civil Rights Act of 1968 has had little effect. Subsidized low-income housing is segregated and this has produced tension and violence. Wichita still has no scattered-site housing for minorities and the poor. (Indeed, members of the city commission have talked about abolishing all public housing.[4])

School Desegregation in Wichita

Total enrollment in Wichita public schools in fall 1976 was 49,995, including 18.6 percent blacks and 3 percent Hispanics. Of the 3,088 faculty members (all

certified employees), 10.2 percent were black and 1.5 percent Hispanic. District facilities included 78 elementary schools, 17 junior high schools, and 7 high schools.

Although the State of Kansas did not require public school segregation, Wichita established a dual system in 1906. Douglas, Grand, 18th Street, and L'Ouverture Elementary Schools were established for black children, and in 1914 the school board began to transport black students living in predominantly white neighborhoods to these schools. This practice ended with the 1951-52 school year, and the next year Wichita abandoned formal segregation. Because of this initiative, the Brown decision involving Topeka Schools had small impact on Wichita. In 1954 Wichita opened its first desegregated school, W.C. Little.

Ending legal segregation did not automatically lead to a desegregated school system. W.C. Little School became a black school as whites moved out of its attendance area. Because Wichita retained a system of relatively small elementary schools (despite charges of inefficiency by various superintendents beginning as early as 1909), the racial composition of particular schools could change swiftly and dramatically as a result of relatively modest demographic movements.

Wichita's fragile and tentative desegregation advance was soon undermined by unscrupulous realtors who typically advised clients that "they could only sell to families with no small children because the school was going 'Negro.'" Such exploitation was accompanied by the school board's refusal to redraw attendance boundaries to encourage desegregation. In 1958 white parents were able to persuade school officials to redraw attendance zones so their children could transfer from Mathewson Junior High School, with a growing proportion of minority students, to Brooks Junior High School. In the 1960s highway development led to further boundary adjustments, and blacks were shifted into predominantly black schools and whites into predominantly white ones.

In 1966 the Wichita school board first attempted to reverse racial isolation in its schools when it decided to allow students from Mathewson Junior High

School to attend any other junior high school in the city if they provided their own transportation. The measure proved too little and too late, however, to satisfy those seeking broader desegregation. On February 11, 1966, Chester I. Lewis, an attorney representing the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), filed a complaint with the U.S. Office of Education alleging discriminatory practices in violation of Titles IV and VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The Office for Civil Rights, after visits to Wichita in 1967 and 1968, recommended several measures including the closing of Mathewson Junior High School, suspension of construction of a proposed elementary school, accelerated faculty desegregation, and a program to end the segregation of seven elementary schools.

In 1969 the Wichita Board of Education's low economic area problems (LEAP) committee delivered its report. The blue-ribbon committee (including corporate, business, school, and university representatives) had been appointed by the board several years earlier "to study the problems of education in 'the low-economic areas and related problems of integration in the school system.'" The LEAP committee reported that, prior to 1960, the schools with predominantly black, low-income student enrollments had higher than average pupil-teacher ratios and lower than average pupil expenditures; after 1960 these schools received compensatory services. However, the committee concluded from its investigation of the educational impact of these compensatory programs that they were not an effective substitute for full desegregation. The committee found that desegregated schools with a substantial middle-class environment generated healthy attitudes toward school and society, and that these attitudes were not forthcoming in students in predominantly black or predominantly white schools. Teachers were reported to be particularly concerned that students of differing racial and socioeconomic backgrounds should have opportunities to interact. The district reports that there was overt resistance by some teachers to desegregation. The committee's analysis of the achievements of low- and high-status children of all ethnic groups showed that the benefits of desegregation

were most apparent in the higher achievement and improved self-perception of working-class white students. Further, black students consistently achieved higher scores as the number of whites in their classes increased.

A majority of the LEAP committee endorsed recommendations on many educational and administrative matters. It urged the socioeconomic integration of students, that racial desegregation ought to be part of socioeconomic desegregation, and that no school should have a minority enrollment exceeding 20 percent. Several committee members withheld their endorsements on the grounds that the recommendations were impractical and contrary to community sentiment.

In counterpoint to the committee's array of evidence favoring desegregation were its findings on the actual racial distribution in the public schools of Wichita Unified School District #259. Ten of the 16 junior high schools and 3 of the 6 senior high schools had few black students. In 1965, 89 percent of the black elementary school population attended only 7 of the approximately 90 elementary schools. Although by 1968 this proportion had dropped to 76 percent, projections indicated that given this rate of decline--assuming no resegregation--it would require 20 years to produce acceptable desegregation.

II. THE "1969 PLAN"

The district regards the appointment of Dr. Alvin E. Morris as superintendent in June 1968 as a significant step forward in its course toward desegregation.[5] In August 1968 the school board announced policies which it hoped would bring it into compliance with the demands of the Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The school board presented these policies even as the LEAP committee gathered evidence that would lead that committee a year later to call for far more sweeping changes. The LEAP report was, by and large, ignored by the school board,[6] which stood by its narrower understanding of what constituted desegregation and compliance and developed the "1969 Plan." This plan operated until Federal administrative enforcement actions in 1970-71 led to the threatened suspension of Federal funding for several programs in Wichita's public schools.

The school board's 1968 policy statement included resolves to comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, to continue efforts to achieve staff integration, to end practices (such as the use of portable classrooms) that had produced racial isolation, and to use such measures as pupil reassignment and transportation to desegregate the secondary schools. The administration considered education parks as well as pairing, redistricting, freedom of choice, and crossbusing programs as possible means to implement the board's policies. The administration eventually adopted a modified crossbusing arrangement which became known as the 1969 Plan. While the 1969 Plan addressed racial isolation in the secondary schools, it included no measures to correct the segregation noted by the Office of Education in seven of Wichita's elementary schools.[7]

In addition to transporting secondary school students, the administration realigned the feeder patterns from elementary schools into the junior and senior high schools. Most of the black population of Wichita was included in a new "assigned attendance area" from which students were to be drawn to produce future desegregated classes entering the secondary schools. This approach was necessary because the racial proportions in individual elementary schools were largely unaffected by the 1969 Plan, although the removal of portable classrooms did necessitate the transfer of some black students from predominantly black schools to predominantly white ones nearby. The seven predominantly black schools were, however, slated to receive additional compensatory educational services. The faculties of these seven schools were also to be desegregated by 1970, by compulsory transfers if necessary.[8] This goal had been announced by the superintendent in 1968 after the board had decided that teachers and administrators should not be assigned on the basis of race.[9]

Mathewson Junior High School was to be closed as a junior high school at the end of the 1968-69 school year and would become a learning center for grades five and six and the location of various special educational activities.

In 1970 school administrators made several attempts to promote elementary school desegregation within the framework of the 1969 Plan. They urged residents of the predominantly black assigned attendance area to transfer their children to predominantly white schools and encouraged white parents from the rest of the city to transfer their children into the area. Black pupils in the fifth grade at Mathewson were to be assigned to schools outside the assigned attendance area, while predominantly black L'Ouverture and Dunbar Elementary Schools were to be given "preferential attention for assignment of Caucasian pupils and/or for placement of experimental programs to enhance integration and instructional effort." Schools in the assigned attendance area were to be provided with social service personnel and with home visitation, compensatory education, inservice, and afterschool recreation programs.[10] A biracial committee was to be established

to "facilitate transportation arrangements," and the school district agreed to bus transferees in this elaboration--which depended heavily on student volunteers--of the 1969 Plan.[11]

III. THE DESEGREGATION PLAN OF 1971

Coming To Terms With OCR

Wichita's system of volunteerism and compensatory programs failed to produce enough desegregation to satisfy the standards of the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), which had first examined the racial distribution in Wichita's schools after the local NAACP's complaint in 1966. In response to warnings from OCR in 1969, the district first asserted that it would not abandon the neighborhood school concept and later denied that it was maintaining a dual system.[12] On January 19, 1970, OCR notified the district that its desegregation efforts, including the 1969 Plan, were insufficient and that the initiation of enforcement proceedings would be recommended.[13]

Several weeks later, OCR detailed the district's violations: the district had failed to promote desegregation in the decades following its abandonment of a dual school system; it had permitted resegregation following natural desegregation and, in the case of Mathewson Junior High School, had redrawn boundary lines and changed the faculty to foster resegregation; and, in 1970 it had devised one-way busing plans which imposed an unequal burden on the black community.[14]

Although School Board President Robert Davis believed that a slightly modified proposal by the board would be found acceptable,[15] Judge Irvin Hackerman concluded 4 days of administrative law hearings with a ruling on March 1, 1971, that the Wichita schools were operating in violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The judge held that school segregation was indefensible even when the reasons for the appearance and persistance of segregation in a school system were not

race-related. Moreover, he found the Wichita school board had wrongfully drawn school boundaries to conform with racial boundaries, thus excluding black students from predominantly white schools.[16]

From the evidence, Judge Hackerman concluded that Wichita had misused HEW, HUD, and National Science Foundation funds by applying them to programs operated in a discriminatory manner. Only programs under the Community Action Program, Child Nutrition Act, Manpower Development and Training Act, and Vocational Education Act were declared untainted. Judge Hackerman ordered all Federal funds to the system suspended, pending appeal. On the day following the ruling, J. Stanley Pottinger, then Director of OCR asserted that "Wichita schools could still come into compliance and avert the fund loss."[17]

On March 1, 1971, the school board voted eight to three to appeal the judge's decision through the administrative process. However, board members soon realized that, should all proceedings fail, the district could not operate without the $3 million scheduled to be terminated; moreover, the Federal Government might conceivably seek recovery of its funds already spent.[18] The school board also decided it had a moral obligation to do something, and so it did.

The Office for Civil Rights and the school board came to terms on April 6, 1971. The 15-point "Memorandum of Agreement" (which drew on the expertise and suggestions of superintendent Morris) specified school closings, set deadlines for segregated elementary schools to bring their minority enrollments within a stipulated range, called for the prevention of resegregation at peripheral schools, obliged the school board to develop an assignment formula and a desegregation plan using crossbusing, and postponed the administrative law hearings then in progress.[19]

Lining Up Support

Board President Beren and Superintendent Morris briefed the board and, finding it less than enthusiastic,[20] tried to rally other support for the agreement. They won support from the Metropolitan Wichita Council, an organization consisting of the most

influential business leaders, and this was crucial because there were powerful opposing forces. In 1970, for example, the area's Republican State senators wrote to President Nixon asking that he intervene to prevent busing.[21] The council publicly announced its support for the agreement. While the endorsement from the business community spiked the threat of opposition from other community leaders, it aroused the suspicion of black leaders.

In May 1971, the school board approved the agreement and adopted steps to implement it. Two conservative members voted in opposition because they thought the arrangement went too far, while two liberal members voted likewise because they thought it did too little. One impetus for board approval was the threat of court-imposed busing under the U.S. Supreme Court's Swann ruling, issued in 1971.[22] In June 1971, OCR--fortified by Swann--imposed revisions in the memorandum of agreement. These provided that facilities be kept open in the black community and specified the ratios of students to be established and the method of assignment if compulsory assignment became necessary.[23]

Black skepticism persisted even after the memorandum of agreement was accepted and made public. Willis Hockett, president of the Wichita chapter of the NAACP, said that if parents accepted the plan, he would also. He added that "the fact that the majority [of black children] are still being bused out just intensifies what's been going on all along. It could be equalized a little more."[24] Attorney Chester I. Lewis commented:

> I imagine there are some catches in there someplace. I just don't trust the school board to act in good faith in reference to black children's needs. They haven't in the past and there's no reason to think they are now.[25]

Comprehensive Desegregation

In any event, the desegregation plan to be implemented in district schools called for "a substantial number of pupils...to be reassigned from their neighborhood schools" and for the involvement of

"schools representative of all socioeconomic, racial, and geographic areas of the district...either by receiving pupils from other areas, by sending pupils to schools in other areas," or both.[26] Reassignment was to be for a period of not less than 1 academic year. An initial effort was to be undertaken to enlist student volunteers for reassignment, and special educational programs were to be relocated to assist natural desegregation. Where these measures proved insufficient, a method of random selection involving only white and black pupils would be employed. (If in the future Hispanics became a majority in any school, they would be included in the selection process.) The lottery would be based on the child's date of birth and would resemble the selective service lottery. Various exemptions from the lottery were to be established to foster natural desegregation, to equalize the burden of transfers and transportation, and for health reasons. Assignment procedures were to be supervised by an advisory and monitoring committee from the community.[27] Responsibility for drafting the lottery was in the hands of Dr. Donald Younglund, pupil service director, who headed the pupil selection committee. About 2,000 black and 1,000 white pupils would be bused under the plan (raising the percentage of students bused by the district from 15.9 to 22.8 percent).[28] The plan called for the elementary schools to reflect the district's overall racial proportions of 85 percent white and 15 percent minority.

Principals were to establish parent participation committees in each elementary school. These committees were to explain and promote the plan, to encourage voluntary transfers, to serve as sounding boards for questions and complaints from other parents, and to develop special activities to help parents and children adjust to new schools.[29]

The district also planned expansions of its reading, social service, SEED mathematics, and follow through programs, and the introduction of two pilot programs for the emotionally disturbed.[30]

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

The Office for Civil Rights gave final approval for the transfer scheme on July 22, 1971. On August 18, 1971, HEW notified the Wichita school district that it was eligible to receive all possible Federal funding.[31]

The district prepared to implement its plan. It issued a pamphlet entitled Bring Us Together to explain the plan and encourage voluntary transfers. The pamphlet declared, "Your child becomes involved in education in its most significant form by meeting children of different racial and cultural heritage."[32] The district established a human relations department and provided human relations training of some type for more than 800 teachers.[33]

Dr. Doyle Koontz, director of elementary education, referred to this implementation period as "a time when educators can make a maximum contribution to the efforts of integration." He added that "we have to make some sacrifices to accomplish the long-range benefits....What we're trying to do is build a better social structure. Some small inconvenience now may make things easier for future generations of Wichita students."[34]

Community Reaction to the Plan

As early as January 1970, some black parents and teachers had announced opposition to the prospect of crossbusing.[35] Now, with actual busing imminent, a group called Concerned Parents representing the black community initiated a campaign against the plan. Concerned Parents joined with a white community group, Citizens Committee for Neighborhood Schools, in circulating petitions. In July 1971 the two groups

held a joint meeting to oppose busing.[36] The Citizens Committee for Neighborhood Schools took the additional step of filing a suit seeking to block implementation of the plan.[37]

Parents and Taxpayers (PAT), another white antibusing group, sponsored newspaper advertisements asking citizens to apply "pressure, or harassment, or whatever you want to call it, to influence them [school board members]. If we get just two people to change their votes we could get the plan changed."[38] PAT called for a boycott of desegregated schools and asked its members to sign the following statement:

> I pledge to refuse recognition of the school board plan to close neighborhood schools and use busing to satisfy HEW. I will refuse to allow my child to be reassigned against my wishes to a school other than a neighborhood school. I pledge to support others who reject the unreasonable demands of HEW.[39]

PAT joined with the black community group, Concerned Parents, in filing suit on August 10, 1971, to prevent implementation of the desegregation plan.[40] This suit was consolidated with the Citizens Committee for Neighborhood Schools class action; HEW was added as a codefendant. Nineteen taxpayers later filed a motion to have themselves released from the class action, which they claimed sought unfairly to represent them.[41] The plan was upheld, however, by the Federal district court and in 1974 by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit. The Supreme Court subsequently refused to review these lower court rulings.

The First Two Years, 1971-73

Protests against the plan were noisy but ineffective, in part because of strong support in the business community. Despite the talk of boycotts, only 45 children were kept from school in protest against the plan.[42] There was no violence in or out of school.[43] Although there were some racial incidents in the schools, these diminished rapidly. One teacher hostile to the desegregation effort was impressed by the peace that had prevailed, and a parent reported that much of the publicity over alleged racial strife

was generated by reporters inaccurately reporting such episodes.[44]

In September 1971 the district received $332,745 in Emergency School Assistance Program (ESAP) funds to be administered by the district's office of staff development. This was used to conduct human relations training for about 3,000 professionals, classified employees, parents, students, and business and community leaders. For this purpose the district was divided into clusters, each cluster receiving four sessions of about 5 hours each. Some of the funds were also used to allow individual schools to acquire multiethnic materials and to provide other multiethnic materials for use throughout the district.

Despite the general tranquility and the Federal aid, many teachers encountered difficulties in the new situation. In a report issued towards the end of the first year of desegregation, the Wichita chapter of the National Education Association cited such problems as overcrowding of schools and classrooms; shortage of personnel; lack of materials and programs for low-economic status and minority children; lack of parental support and too much permissiveness in the home; and lack of support from principals and school administrators. Discipline and the general rebelliousness of students were central concerns.[45]

As the first year ended, there were also positive signs. Five schools which had become naturally desegregated were dropped from the lottery.[46] Moreover, the number of students who would have to be reassigned dropped as students volunteered to remain the second year in the schools to which they had been assigned.[47] While 700 pupils had volunteered to transfer for desegregation in the first year, nearly 2,000 volunteered for the second. Nearly 400 of the 1,400 white pupils bused to formerly all-black schools volunteered to return.[48]

Minor adjustments in the plan were made on May 1, 1972. The board also emphasized at this time the right of siblings to attend the same school and its intention to permit children to attend neighborhood schools to the maximum extent possible.[49]

In June 1972 the district began to receive funds under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act for inschool assistance and discipline training for teachers, to acquire multicultural materials, and to arrange summer workshops.[50]

In the second year of desegregation, disciplinary problems increased. Expulsions doubled and suspensions rose dramatically. The dropout rate was relatively stable, increasing 1.3 percent for black pupils and decreasing by the same amount for whites.[51] The district established special facilities for troubled junior and senior high school students[52] and official policies on police-student contact,[53] and prepared a handbook on student rights.

During the summer of 1973, further training was provided to aid middle-class teachers in overcoming any prejudices they might harbor toward lower status black children.[54] Gradually, teachers became content with the new system.[55]

V. EFFECTS OF THE PLAN

Degree of Desegregation

By 1975 only 50 percent of the white students who were to attend former predominantly black schools had to be selected by lottery; in the first year of desegregation, the figure had been 98 percent. White students volunteering to stay in schools that had been predominantly black numbered 1,100 in 1975,[56] as opposed to only 400 three years earlier.

In a 1973 study, the National Opinion Research Center at Johns Hopkins University listed Wichita as 1 of only 10 school systems in the United States that was completely desegregated. The center reported that to achieve desegregation about 54 percent of the black students and 2.5 percent of the white students had been reassigned. The study concluded that Wichita had done about as much as could be done to desegregate fully.[57] The consensus of persons interviewed in Wichita by Commission staff was that this situation would not exist had not the Office for Civil Rights brought pressure on the district.[58]

Student Achievement

A 1973 review of test scores indicated that elementary school pupils in the district tested at or above the national norms for their grades. Formerly black schools which had been integrated produced results near or above expected levels in all subjects. The same was true of schools where high mobility rates led to expectations of decline. Junior high schools, however, were not producing as good results.[59]

A 1974 study showed that, while test scores varied from year to year, it would be "very difficult to

Table 1

Median Scores on Iowa Test of Basic Skills
(In Grade Level Equivalents)
1972-75

	Vocational		Reading		Language		Work Study		Mathematics	
	1972	1975	1972	1975	1972	1975	1972	1975	1972	1975
3rd Grade	3.3	3.6	3.3	4.0	3.3	4.7	----	----	3.1	3.8
4th Grade	4.1	4.9	4.4	5.0	4.0	5.0	4.2	4.7	4.2	4.6
5th Grade	5.2	5.8	5.3	5.8	4.9	5.8	5.1	5.7	5.0	5.6
6th Grade	6.0	6.6	6.2	6.7	5.9	6.6	6.0	6.6	5.9	6.5
9th Grade	8.6	8.6	8.7	8.7	7.8	8.0	8.5	8.6	8.4	8.5

Source: Data supplied by Unified School District #259 (Wichita School District).

prove" that test scores slipped in Wichita during desegregation. In 1964 Wichita third-graders ranked in the 54th percentile nationally; in 1974 they ranked in the 56th percentile.[60] In 1975 tests, students in the public elementary schools scored consistently above the grade levels in which they were tested. Ninth grade pupils scored less than a year below grade level.[61] These scores were a slight improvement over the scores achieved by pupils tested in the fall of 1972 (when desegregation first began and before it could affect results), as table 1 shows.

FINDINGS

1. Wichita maintained a dual school system from 1906 to 1952. Segregation continued, however, between 1952 and 1971.

2. The board of education appointed a blue-ribbon, low economic area problems (LEAP) committee which made recommendations for desegregation of the schools along both racial and socioeconomic lines. Recommendations for improvement in the quality of teaching, development of educational parks, and pupil transportation were rejected by the board.

3. In 1969 the board of education ordered the desegregation of Wichita's secondary schools. This involved the dispersal of black students upon whom the burden of desegregation was placed.

4. After OCR moved to cut off Federal funds to the district, and that sanction had been approved by an administrative law judge, the district adopted a voluntary desegregation plan to establish equitable pupil ratios by crossbusing students and closing some predominantly black schools. This was implemented in the 1971-72 school year.

5. The plan was adopted because the business and civic leaders supported the effort publicly.

6. After adoption both black and white community groups protested without impact.

7. The entire community participated in implementation, led by the school administration.

8. Despite some difficulties with discipline (not associated with desegregation but concurrent with it),

desegregation proved successful. Academic achievement improved. Teachers learned to cope with new problems. White parents and children volunteered to participate in the desegregation effort in ever-increasing numbers.

NOTES

1. Wichita Area Chamber of Commerce, Community Audit (Wichita Chamber of Commerce, January 1976).

2. Ibid.

3. Low Economic Area Problems (LEAP) Committee, School and Society in One City (Wichita: Unified School District #259, July 1969). Unified School District #259 is the legal name of the Wichita public school district. All information in the remainder of this chapter, unless otherwise attributed, is derived from the LEAP committee report.

4. Otis Milton, executive director, Wichita Urban League, telephone interview, Sept. 21, 1976.

5. Information supplied by U.S.D. #259.

6. Wichita Beacon, Mar. 1, 1971; information also supplied by U.S.D. #259.

7. Board of Education, U.S.D. #259, "Plan of Compliance" (Jan. 6, 1969).

8. Ibid.

9. U.S.D. #259, "Staffing Policies or Requirements in the Wichita Public School System" (May 23, 1968).

10. Board of Education, U.S.D. #259, "Principles and Plans for Continued Integration, Adopted April 23, 1970, Revised, August 3, 1970," p. 4.

11. Ibid.

12. Wichita Eagle, July 22, 1969.

13. Information supplied by U.S.D. #259.

14. Eagle, Feb. 23, 1970.

15. Eagle, Feb. 20, 1970.

16. Beacon, Mar. 1, 1971.

17. Ibid.

18. Beacon, July 28, 1971.

19. "Memorandum of Agreement" (Apr. 22, 1971).

20. Beacon, July 29, 1971.

21. Beacon, July 27, 1971.

22. 402 U.S.1 (1971).

23. Beacon, July 28, 1971; July 29, 1971.

24. Eagle, Apr. 28, 1971.

25. Ibid.

26. U.S.D. #259, "Proposed Principles and Pupil Selection and Assignment Procedures for Implementing the Elementary School Compliance Plan" (June 21, 1971), p. 1.

27. Ibid.

28. Beacon, June 11, 1971.

29. Beacon, June 16, 1971.

30. Eagle & Beacon, Aug. 7, 1971.

31. Information supplied by U.S.D. #259.

32. Beacon, June 25, 1971.

33. Beacon, Aug. 5, 1971.

34. Beacon, Aug. 30, 1971.

35. Eagle, Jan. 28, 1970; Feb. 23, 1970; Beacon, Jan. 12, 1970.

36. Eagle & Beacon, July 24, 1971.

37. Beacon, Aug. 13, 1971.

38. Beacon, Aug. 4, 1971.

39. Ibid.

40. Eagle, Aug. 13, 1971.

41. Eagle, Aug. 17, 1971.

42. Beacon, June 7, 1972.

43. Beacon, Aug. 26, 1971.

44. Information supplied by U.S.D. #259.

45. Eagle, Feb. 20, 1970; Dec. 16, 1971; Mar. 28, 1972; Beacon, Mar. 12, 1972; June 6, 1972.

46. Eagle, Apr. 25, 1972.

47. Beacon, Apr. 3, 1972.

48. Eagle, May 18, 1972.

49. U.S.D. #259, Office of the Superintendent, "Basic Principles for Continuing the Elementary School Integration Plan for 1972-73" (May 1, 1973).

50. Beacon, June 29, 1972.

51. Beacon, Aug. 6, 1973.

52. Beacon, July 31, 1973.

53. Eagle, Aug. 20, 1973.

54. Eagle, Aug. 2, 1973.

55. Information supplied by U.S.D. #259.

56. Eagle, July 3, 1975.

57. Beacon, Nov. 26, 1973.

58. Staff of the Commission's Midwestern Regional Office in Kansas City, Missouri, interviewed school officials, school board members, teachers, parents, and civic leaders in Wichita in February 1976.

59. Eagle, June 7, 1973.

60. Eagle, Feb. 21, 1974.

61. Carolyn C. Plavcan and others, Profiles of Performance in the Wichita Public Schools (Wichita: U.S.D. #259, July 1975).

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